

From: Carl Brown
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am opposed to the proposed settlement. It does nothing to correct the wrongs that have been done. It actually increases Microsoft's strangle hold on the desktop software market.

While the donation of hardware is good, it should be required that no Microsoft software be included. If it is, then the future upgrade path for these schools, who by definition can not afford it, involves putting money directly back into Microsoft's already bulging pockets. Microsoft has acted like a drug dealer for years, and this is just another example of this behaviour. The first hit is free, then after that they have another lifelong addict.

Furthermore, a "donation" of software costs Microsoft no more than the cost of reproducing CD's, while they can claim settlement value of the maximum retail price per unit. Allowing their own software to form any part of the monetary value of the settlement is quite simply giving them a license to print money. As part of a settlement of a case in which they have already been found guilty, this is completely ridiculous, at the very least.

Open source software has virtually no upgrade cost. But more importantly, if students learn on proprietary systems, all they can ever learn to be is computer operators. They can never learn how software really works because they can't look under the hood. Open source software is an unquestionably superior learning tool.

The settlement proposal should either be thrown out completely, or extensively reworked, to ensure that Microsoft gets no long term gain from a settlement which should be giving them a large long term loss.

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